

HOW CAN WE RAISE THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL EDUCATION SO THAT EVERY STUDENT BENEFITS?

TEACHING TALENT

THE BEST TEACHERS FOR AUSTRALIA'S CLASSROOMS

THE BUSINESS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA



ABOUT THIS PAPER

THIS PAPER, *TEACHING TALENT: THE BEST TEACHERS FOR AUSTRALIA'S CLASSROOMS*, COMPRISES A PAPER PREPARED FOR THE BUSINESS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA (BCA) BY PROFESSOR STEPHEN DINHAM, DR LAWRENCE INGVARSON AND DR ELIZABETH KLEINHENZ OF THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH TITLED 'INVESTING IN TEACHER QUALITY: DOING WHAT MATTERS MOST', PRECEDED BY AN INTRODUCTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS AUTHORED BY THE BCA.

THE CHALLENGE IS TO DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY EDUCATION THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL, WHICH LAYS THE BASIS FOR MEETING LIFELONG NEEDS AND WHICH IS RESPECTED BY TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY ALIKE.

INTRODUCTION

Learning is not an isolated process that takes place during certain years of one's life in formal education. It is a continuum in which individuals are 'students' throughout their lives as they continue to acquire knowledge and skills relevant to their personal needs, work aspirations, their communities and ultimately, the country as a whole.

School education, involving the teaching of and learning by children from pre-school to teenage years, is a critical step in this process and the school system is its foundation. At its core, the school system must provide the highest standard of teaching and create the best learning environment possible for all students. Every individual – no matter what their background – ought to be able to finish school with the knowledge and skills that will give them the opportunity to choose a rewarding career and to fully participate in the life of their community.

The challenge is to develop a framework for quality education that is accessible to all, which lays the basis for meeting these lifelong needs and which is respected by teachers, students and the community alike. Fundamentally, it must allow each individual to reach their potential regardless of their economic means, and enable them to live a life of meaning and purpose. This will provide the foundation for us to successfully negotiate current challenges and achieve the aspiration of becoming a top-five OECD country, supported by a highly skilled and innovative workforce.

The Business Council of Australia vision for education is:



The development of the best educational system in the world that inspires learning and optimises opportunities for every Australian.

Its legacy will be sustained growth in the intellectual, economic and creative capital of the country from one generation to the next.

Australian business leaders want to see reforms to school education that improve learning outcomes and opportunities for all students.

Each year, thousands of Australian students fall behind in their learning from an early age and are never able to catch up. As a result they lack the capabilities needed to fully participate in employment and the life of their community. At the same time, if we are to continue to compete effectively in the global market of the 21st century, the quality of our education system needs to be among the very best in the world.

Making sure that every student receives a high-quality education – by learning the knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to enter and be successful in a rewarding career or vocation – must be among our highest priorities. This needs to be combined with a commitment to substantially increasing the proportion of young Australians completing Year 12 or the vocational education and training equivalent of year 12. Business regards academic and vocational and technical pathways as equally valuable routes to a rewarding and successful career. For this reason, the BCA welcomes the commitment of the federal government to making education a priority.

Improving the learning outcomes of all students requires a concerted commitment from governments, schools, local communities and the business sector to lift the quality of the school system.

Research has consistently shown that improving the quality of teaching is the most effective way to achieve better educational outcomes for individual students. Excellent teaching is the key to increased student engagement and higher levels of achievement, regardless of student background.

For this reason, the accompanying paper, written for the BCA by the Australian Council for Educational Research, focuses on what Australia needs to do to raise the quality of teaching in all schools for the benefit of every student. In particular, five reforms are required:

- Recruiting the most talented, capable and committed people into the teaching profession.
- A new national certification system that recognises excellent teachers and provides the basis for a new career path for the profession.
- A new remuneration structure that rewards excellent teachers and demonstrates that, as a society, Australia values the teaching profession.
- A comprehensive strategy that supports teachers to continue to learn and improve their teaching throughout their careers.
- The introduction of a national assessment and accreditation system for teacher education courses.

While we recognise that remuneration is not the only issue that needs to be addressed in order to improve the quality of teaching, it is greatly important. The total remuneration that an individual can expect to earn does reflect the value that a community places on a particular occupation. Last year the BCA proposed that the best classroom teachers should have the opportunity to earn up to double the average teaching salary – representing a total income of about \$130,000 – in return for meeting specific criteria for an accomplished or leading teacher.

But initiatives to improve the quality of teaching are unlikely to be enough on their own. They need to be supported by a comprehensive strategy to improve the quality and relevance of education for all students. This wider strategy must provide for:

- The introduction of a new governance framework that provides principals with greater autonomy.
- The introduction of a nationally consistent, engaging and flexible curriculum that can be customised to the individual learning requirements of students.
- Early intervention to prevent students falling behind.
- Greater investment in education and training in return for the achievement of the other reforms.

A number of these reform priorities have been supported by key stakeholders including both the federal government and Opposition. The challenge is to translate this support into actions that achieve the overriding goal of improved learning for all students.

In particular, giving school principals the authority to hire more of the teachers who

teach in their schools can make an important contribution to better teaching and learning. This is because the head of a school is in the best position to know the needs of that school and to match those needs with the skills of potential teachers. Such an approach would need to be supplemented by making resources available and supporting arrangements to assist the principals of remote or disadvantaged schools to attract an equal share of the most talented and capable teachers.

Recent research conducted for the BCA has identified problems with Australia's school education system. One problem is that many young people fall behind in their learning during their earliest school years, become disengaged and then never catch up. As a result, they achieve only minimal results.

Second, our secondary school completion rates are lower than countries we compare ourselves with. The BCA regards a substantial training qualification as the equivalent of completing Year 12. Even when this is taken into account, there are still tens of thousands of young Australians every year who do not complete Year 12 or its training equivalent.

Third, there is a serious shortage of young people with the knowledge and skills required for many areas of demand in the Australian workforce.

Further problems include outdated facilities and a lack of equipment to support schools in achieving better results.

In light of the critical role of effective leadership and governance when it comes to addressing these problems and to making certain that every school benefits from future reforms, the BCA will be undertaking specific work on governance structures in Australia.



Reforms to the governance of the education system should be aimed at removing all unnecessary duplication between government bureaucracies and, whenever possible, devoting a greater proportion of overall resources to the delivery of education services in our schools.

In addition, we will be undertaking an examination of teacher education courses and the wider issue of pathways into teaching, which are recognised as important components of a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of teaching in Australia.

The BCA views raising the quality of education outcomes as part of a workforce and community participation agenda, which is a dynamic new social agenda for the nation.

Only by improving the quality of education provided to every young person can we effectively begin to give disadvantaged sections of our society the foundation they need to participate fully in the workforce and in community life. Realising this objective will produce social, health and economic benefits, not only for the individuals themselves, but for the nation.

If we get it right, this would be one of the most effective and sustainable economic policies we could put in place. Ultimately, the quality of teaching provided in our schools is integral to giving young people the opportunity to enter and enjoy successful and rewarding careers and live meaningful and purposeful lives.

We look forward to working with the federal government, and with state and territory governments, on a comprehensive strategy to improve learning outcomes for all students.

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INVESTING IN TEACHER QUALITY: DOING WHAT MATTERS MOST

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The quality of teaching is the main driver of successful student learning outcomes.
- Australia's teaching profession and its schools constitute an infrastructure that is critical to its survival in an increasingly global economy.
- Every student deserves teachers who are suited to teaching, well trained and qualified, highly skilled, caring and committed to moving forward the learning of their students.
- One of the main roles of leadership in professions is to build a framework for professional learning from registration to advanced levels of standards, and systems for providing assessments and certification for members who reach those standards. It is important, therefore, to strengthen leadership in quality teaching at the wider professional level as well as at the level of the individual school. Education in Australia is still highly bureaucratised, and it is time to question whether bureaucratic management of schools by state education departments is sufficient to deliver the kind of leadership that influences teachers' practice significantly or improves student learning outcomes.
- Stakeholders are unanimous that the first step in achieving improved outcomes in education is to attract the best people into teaching.
- Salary may not be a strong reason why current teachers have chosen to teach, but it is a strong reason why many abler graduates choose not to teach, and this is cause for considerable concern if we want our education system to remain among the best in the world. There is no justification for assuming from this that our society can continue to get away with not paying teachers what they are worth. Research studies also constantly confirm that salary and working conditions are the main reasons why many good teachers leave the profession.
- Present arrangements in teaching do not encourage, reward or indeed require advanced professional learning.
- It is clear that there is a broad consensus that action is needed to radically strengthen procedures for recognising and rewarding teachers who reach high teaching standards.
- Who really believes that a top salary for classroom teachers of about \$70,000 means we place sufficient value on teachers' work to attract the best university graduates? Who really believes that the typical office spaces in which teachers are expected to prepare and assess student work and carry out their business are indicators of an attractive and esteemed profession?
- Attracting enough people into teacher education and attracting people of suitable quality are two major issues that tend to work against each other. Any decline in the attractiveness of teaching is cause for concern, particularly if this results in universities lowering entry standards to fill their allocated quotas for teacher education students. When decline in the attractiveness of teaching as a career coincides with projected teacher shortages, this increases the pressure for entry standards to fall. This is the situation we face at present. Entry standards to teaching must not be allowed to fall further. Rather, they should rise.

- The next step is to prepare future teachers through teacher education programs that meet the highest standards. It is becoming clear that the most effective way of achieving quality and consistency will be through a system of national accreditation of teacher education courses.
- There is a pressing need for a unified national approach to managing teacher demand and supply.
- There are no cost-neutral ways to ensure that in the future Australia will have a teaching profession equal to the best in the world. But there will be major costs if we do not. Fortunately, there is broad public recognition of the need for better pay and conditions for teachers. This is conditional, however, on guarantees that it will be linked to sound evidence of improving teacher quality and professional performance.
- Newly conceived career paths are needed for the teaching profession to ensure that teachers have strong incentives to engage in the type of professional learning that leads to high teaching standards and improves student learning outcomes. Salary structures for teachers need to be more effective as instruments for promoting widespread use of successful teaching practices.
- Although there is strong agreement that teacher quality is fundamental, it is currently difficult to find evidence of coherent, concerted, coordinated policy efforts at state and federal levels focused on teacher quality. Accountability for ensuring quality teachers and school leaders is unclear and diffused.
- Education policy needs to focus more clearly on what matters most to student learning – concerted, long-term policies and strategies to assure quality in the teaching profession. We know that good teachers matter, but we must start to act as if we really believed it.

To strengthen the teaching profession, the following actions are needed:

1. A new national agency should be established with one sole function: to establish and provide a voluntary advanced certification system for teachers. (Initial registration is compulsory and remains the responsibility of state registration bodies).
2. This agency should be constituted so that it brings together all the major stakeholders with an interest in recognising and rewarding quality teaching.
3. The agency should offer certification at two levels beyond initial registration as a competent teacher: the Accomplished Teacher level and the Leading Teacher level. Salaries for Accomplished Teachers should reach a level that is twice the starting salary for graduate teachers. Leading Teacher salaries should reach a salary that is 2.5 times starting salaries.
4. Standards at the Accomplished Teacher level should differentiate between what accomplished teachers know and do within each specialist field of teaching (e.g. early childhood specialist, primary school specialist, high school English specialist, etc.). Standards at the Leading Teacher level should differentiate between what teacher leaders know and do to promote improved learning outcomes among teams of teachers.
5. The main purposes of the system will be twofold: to provide a basis for offering more attractive salaries and career paths to graduates and those who seek to change careers; and to strengthen incentives for professional learning and widespread use of successful practices.

Conclusion

What is clearer now is the necessary relationship between the development of teaching as a profession and the development of more effective systems for teacher evaluation and professional development based on profession-defined standards. As we contemplate strategies for revitalising the teaching profession and assuring the quality of Australia's education system in the future, the strategy of establishing an independent national body with a clearly defined certification function has become an imperative.

PART 1 TEACHER QUALITY: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Current context

The quality of teaching has become a major issue both in Australia and internationally (Senate Standing Committee, 2007; Zammit et al., 2007; Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003; OECD, 2005).

Although Australia performs well on international measures of student achievement such as PISA (the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment involving 400,000 15-year-olds in 57 countries), there are concerns over equity. Many students in Australia continue to struggle, including Indigenous students, where the performance gap with non-Indigenous students remains wide. Students' social backgrounds have a greater influence on educational results in Australia than in higher performing countries such as Finland and Canada (McGaw, 2007). PISA findings released in December 2007 indicate that Australia's performance has 'slipped' in comparison with other OECD nations. Since the previous survey in 2003, Australia has dropped from third to sixth place in reading; from eighth to ninth in mathematics; and remains in third place in science. These changes in rankings are mainly due to the improved performance of other nations.¹

PISA 2006 draws attention to, and underlines, some well-understood challenges that we face in Australia. A first challenge is to reduce the number of students who are falling by the wayside in our schools. Many students become disenchanted, disengaged, fall further behind each year and leave school with unacceptably low levels of the basics. The OECD estimates that 13 per cent of Australian 15-year-olds are performing below the OECD 'baseline' and are at risk of not having the basics required for work and productive citizenship as adults. Australia is not unusual in this regard (the OECD average is 19 per cent), but this remains a serious concern and challenge to Australian schools.

Worryingly, the percentage of 'at risk' students is much higher for some sections of the Australian population. Approximately 40 per cent of Indigenous students, 27 per cent of students living in remote parts of Australia and 23 per cent of students from the lowest socioeconomic quartile are considered by the OECD to be 'at risk'.

The challenge we face as a nation is to ensure that every student, regardless of their background or where they live, has access to high-quality teaching and high-quality resources. To achieve this, we may need to increase incentives for our best teachers to work in our most challenging schools. (Masters, 2007)

There is strong consensus that Australian education cannot rest on its laurels while other nations such as Hong Kong (China), Chinese Taipei, Canada, Korea, Switzerland and New Zealand are making significant gains and have overtaken Australia in some cases.

Influential groups with diverse interests and aspirations have reached broad agreement on the steps that need to be taken to improve the learning opportunities of Australian children. Stakeholders including the Business Council of Australia, the Australian Education Union, the Council of the Australian Federation, the the Australian Labor Party and the federal Coalition have recently published statements that demonstrate unprecedented agreement and willingness to act.² Their views coalesce around the proposition, which research has now shown to be unassailable, that:



The quality of teaching is the main driver of successful student learning outcomes.

The importance of the classroom teacher

Until the mid-1960s it was widely believed that schools and teachers made little difference to student achievement, which was largely determined by heredity, family background and socioeconomic context (Reynolds et al., 2000: 3–4; Dinham, 2007b: 263–264).

There is now considerable international evidence that the major in-school influence on student achievement is the quality of the classroom teacher (Greenwald, Hedges & Laine, 1996; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Rowe, 2003; Hattie, 2003, 2007; OECD, 1994, 2005).

‘... the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher ... The immediate and clear implication of this finding is that seemingly more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor.’

(Wright et al., 1997: 63).

However, research evidence is also clear on a related matter: teacher quality varies considerably within schools and across schools (Rowe, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2006).

As John Hattie, a leader in the field of measuring the effects on student achievement, has noted, it is what teachers know, do, and care about that is most powerful in influencing student achievement (Hattie, 2003). Hattie (2003: 13) concluded from a major international meta-analysis of research into teaching that:

‘Expert teachers do differ from experienced teachers – particularly on the way they represent their classrooms, the degree of challenges that they present to students, and most critically, in the depth of processing that their students attain. Students who are taught by expert teachers exhibit an understanding of the concepts targeted in instruction that is more integrated, more coherent, and at a higher level of abstraction than the understanding achieved by other students.’

The kind of knowledge that matters most in successful teaching is what teachers understand about the content and subjects they are expected to teach and how students

learn that content. What teachers know about content is fundamental; it affects how well they represent that content for learning, how judiciously they select learning activities and materials, how well they can sustain quality discussion, how well they manage classrooms and how skilful they are in diagnosing learning difficulties and assessing student progress.

Recruiting, preparing, supporting, professionally developing, certifying and retaining quality teachers must therefore be the key strategies to improve learning in schools.



Every student deserves teachers who are suited to teaching, well trained and qualified, highly skilled, caring and committed to moving forward the learning of their students.

What does quality teaching look like?

Although teachers' work is highly complex and is carried out across a variety of contexts, there is a strong consensus on what quality teachers know and do (OECD, 2005: 99). Research from the NSW Minister for Education and Training and the Australian College of Educators awards for quality teaching found that exemplary teachers from early childhood through to university levels possessed and manifested the following attributes (Dinham, 2002):

1. A high level of knowledge, imagination, passion, and belief in, and for, their field.
2. An overriding commitment to, and high aspirations for, their students' learning.
3. A rich repertoire of skills, methods and approaches on which they are able to draw to provide the right 'mix' for the specific needs of individual students.
4. A detailed understanding of the context in which they are working; of the specific expectations of the community; and of the needs of the cohort of students for whom they are responsible.
5. A capacity to respond appropriately to students, individually and collectively, and to the context, through their teaching practice.
6. A refusal to let anything get in the way of their own or their students' learning, and what they perceive as needing to be addressed.
7. A capacity to engender a high level of respect and even affection from their students and colleagues, a by-product of their hard work and professionalism.
8. A great capacity for engagement in professional learning through self-initiated involvement in various combinations of professional development activities, some provided by the employing authority; others sought out by the individual.
9. A great capacity to contribute to the professional learning of others, and a willingness to do so.
10. Moral leadership and professionalism, in that they exemplify high values and qualities and seek to encourage these in others.

The attributes and capacities outlined above are expressed in various professional standards frameworks for teachers. However, it is how these attributes are dynamically and professionally combined and exercised in the context of teaching particular content and at different levels of schooling that is the hallmark of the expert teacher (OECD, 2005; Hattie, 2003; Berliner, 2004; Ayres et al., 2004).

It is a serious mistake to think that the knowledge and skill that underpins quality teaching is not complex and sophisticated. Teaching standards developed recently by Australian English, science and mathematics teacher associations, for example, are beginning to reflect this complexity.

Research on effective or expert teaching contradicts the view that good teachers are ‘born’, not ‘made’ (Berliner, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Scott & Dinham, 2008). While not everyone is suited to teaching or should be a teacher, being an effective teacher is not a matter of innate ability or personality, but prior learning, motivation, support and ongoing professional development. All teachers benefit from mentoring, feedback, supportive leadership and targeted professional learning.

The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future identified and refuted a number of ‘fatal distractions’ or damaging ‘myths about teaching’ (1996: 51–56):

1. Anyone can teach.
2. Teacher preparation is not much use.
3. Teachers don’t work hard enough.
4. Tenure is the problem.
5. Unions block reform.

‘A consistent finding is that effective teachers are intellectually capable people who are articulate and knowledgeable, and able to think, communicate and plan systematically. Students achieve more with teachers who perform well on tests of literacy and liberal ability ... positive relationships have also been found between teachers’ academic qualifications and student achievement.’

(OECD, 2005: 99)

The key educational revolution: widespread use of successful teaching practices

The kinds of change that matter in education, in terms of both quality and equity, are those that lead to the widespread implementation of good teaching practice – practice consistent with research and high standards of teaching. Dick Elmore (1996) estimated that in the US over the 20th century, there were many well-proven examples of good practice, but even the best of them was rarely adopted by more than 20 per cent of teachers.

Elmore asks, why is it so hard to ‘get to scale’; that is, to ensure widespread implementation of good educational practices and curriculum materials? One of the main reasons, he argues, is that the teaching profession does not have well-established institutions or procedures for using research to identify and define standards for what its members should know and be able to do – normative structures related to good practice are weak. The culture of teaching tends to encourage a view of teaching in which ‘everyone does their own thing’ behind closed doors, practice that is loosely connected to research on teaching or profession-defined standards.

He attributes the problem of ‘getting to scale’ with educational reforms to a belief common among teachers that good teaching is more a ‘bundle’ of personality traits than something most people can learn to get better at (see also Scott & Dinham, 2008).

Getting to scale with educational reforms, Elmore argues, will depend on building new structures for defining and applying teaching standards in the teaching profession.

‘The existence of external norms is important because it institutionalises the idea that professionals are responsible for looking outward at challenging conceptions of practice in addition to looking inward at their values and competencies.’

(Elmore, 1996: 319)

Thus, the major challenge in improving teaching lies not so much in identifying and describing quality teaching, but in developing structures and approaches that ensure widespread use of successful teaching practices: to make best practice, common practice (OECD, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Elmore, 1996).

What are some of the factors presently hindering quality teaching?

The literature has highlighted various factors that can undermine teacher quality and which may result in occupational dissatisfaction, stress and even resignation. Broadly, these include:

- The quality of those entering teacher training; entry standards which are too low.
- Archaic, lock-step salary structures which peak too early; pay systems that don’t encourage or reward professional learning.
- Low expectations for certain students and groups held by some teachers and schools.
- Inadequate links between teacher education institutions and school practitioners; gaps between ‘theory’ and practice; educational research that doesn’t reach and influence schools.
- Varying quality of induction and support for beginning teachers.

- The isolation of the classroom – lack of opportunity for teachers to observe and be observed; for teachers to learn from each other; lack of structured feedback on performance and lack of frameworks and a language to analyse and discuss teaching practice.
- Variable quality of educational leadership in schools.
- Difficulties in identifying, assisting and, where necessary, removing poorly performing teachers.
- Difficulty of linking teaching and learning initiatives to measurable improvements in educational outcomes; fragmented initiatives.
- Problem of up-scaling successful educational practice; reinventing of wheels and hidden treasures; unequal and inequitable distribution of teacher expertise.
- Students who disengage; students who disrupt learning and teaching.
- Shifting of societal responsibilities and problems to teachers and schools; the ‘over-crowded’ curriculum; pressure on primary teachers to be experts across the curriculum.
- Conditions of work – poor workspaces, crowded offices, lack of facilities enjoyed by people in other professions that reflects and reinforces low status of teachers.
- Community perceptions of teachers that result in dissatisfaction – poor status, long holidays, short hours, out of touch, not a real job.

The importance of school leadership to quality teaching

Research has demonstrated the influence of contextual factors, particularly educational leadership and professional learning, on teacher quality. School leaders play major roles in creating the conditions in which teachers can teach effectively and students can learn, although the influence of leadership on student achievement is often underestimated (Dinham, 2007b: 264–265).

A study of 38 secondary schools in NSW where exceptional student outcomes were found to be occurring in years 7 to 10 (Dinham, 2007a) revealed how principals and other school leaders facilitated quality teaching and student accomplishment through their:

- external awareness and engagement
- bias towards innovation and action
- personal qualities and relationships
- vision, high expectations and through creating a culture of success
- emphasis on teacher learning, responsibility and trust
- emphasis on student support, common purpose and collaboration
- central focus on students, learning and teaching across the school.

Overall, successful educational leaders utilise a leadership style which is ‘authoritative’ and characterised by a high degree of ‘demandingness’ yet ‘responsiveness’ in their dealings with staff and students. They ‘give a lot’ and ‘expect a lot’ (Dinham, 2007d).

Current leadership preparation in Australia is highly variable, with various approaches, frameworks and in some cases standards and expectations across jurisdictions. What is indisputable is that Australia will shortly face a leadership vacuum as the current generation of school leaders retire almost en masse over the next decade.


Given the importance of school leaders in assuring effective schooling, one would expect to find well-established institutions, courses and procedures for preparing school leaders in Australia, as in England, Scotland and the Netherlands. This is not the case. A recent international review of leadership standards and the preparation of school leaders (Ingvarson et al., 2006) showed that, in most Australian jurisdictions, courses are relatively brief and piecemeal. Prospective principals in the Netherlands, for example, complete approximately 600 hours of training.

Given recent research on the type of leadership that relates most strongly to improving student learning outcomes (Dinham, 2007a; Robinson & Timperley, 2007; Mulford, 2006), one would expect that a track record of successful teaching and evidence of certification as a highly accomplished teacher were prerequisites for school leadership positions, but such is not the case at present in Australia.

Leadership at the level of the profession

It is increasingly apparent that another kind of leadership is needed – one that operates at the level of the profession. Teachers look not only to principals for leadership in quality teaching. In fact the evidence suggests teachers are much more likely to look to expert teachers who teach in the same field and to their professional associations for new ideas and examples of successful practice. Distributed leadership and practices such as action learning are important initiatives of this type (Aubusson et al., 2007; Dinham et al., 2008).


Promoting leadership at the level of the profession as well as the school is therefore clearly important. However, there is a limit to what school leaders can achieve, for example, if profession-wide structures to assure the supply and quality of new teachers are not operating effectively, or if incentives for ongoing professional learning are weak.



One of the main roles of leadership in professions is to build a framework for professional learning from registration to advanced levels of standards, and systems for providing assessments and certification for members who reach those standards. It is important, therefore, to strengthen leadership in quality teaching at the wider professional level as well as at the level of the individual school. Education in Australia is still highly bureaucratised, and it is time to question whether bureaucratic management of schools by state education departments is sufficient to deliver the kind of leadership that influences teachers' practice significantly or improves student learning outcomes.

Obviously state teacher registration bodies have an important role to play here, but it is leadership at higher levels of professional accomplishment that is weak in Australia, relative to the leadership and quality assurance roles played by professional bodies in other professions. National associations of teachers in particular fields of teaching and principals associations clearly have a valuable role to play here potentially, especially if they grasp the challenge to define and enact their own professional standards.

Attracting the best people to teaching



Stakeholders are unanimous that the first step in achieving improved outcomes in education is to attract the best people into teaching.

In an address given at the BCA Annual Dinner (24 October 2007), Michael Chaney AO, the outgoing President of the Business Council of Australia, expressed concern that the best and brightest young people were not choosing to become teachers:

'It is inevitable that unless we do something about the unattractiveness of teaching as a career, we'll see a steady decline in teaching standards over time. It isn't necessary to spell out what a detrimental effect this would have on our society and our economic prospects.'

Professor Geoff Masters, author of a paper prepared for the BCA in 2007 titled 'Education: Some Policy Considerations' – incorporated within the BCA publication, *Restoring our Edge in Education* – noted the necessity for the establishment of 'a pay structure for teachers that attracts able young people to teaching as a career' (p. 17).

The top-performing education systems of 25 OECD countries studied by McKinsey & Company (2007) recruited their teachers from the top third of each cohort of graduates from their school system. Conversely, many poorly performing school systems selected teachers from the bottom third of graduating high school students.

Top-performing school systems also developed specific mechanisms, such as targeted testing, to ensure the quality of those entering teacher education programs: 'They recognise that a bad selection decision can result in up to 40 years of bad teaching' (Business Council of Australia, 2007: 17). These top systems also ensured the academic rigour of teaching courses, good starting pay and high status for teachers.

Precise figures about the academic quality of school graduates entering primary teacher education courses in Australia are difficult to obtain. The cut-off score for courses in some universities is above the 80th percentile, but for many it is lower than this. For some courses it is less than the 60th percentile, which means Australia is recruiting substantial numbers of primary teachers from the middle third of high school graduates rather than the top third. What matters also is the level of schooling these prospective teachers have had in key subjects that they will expect to teach, such as mathematics and science. A Year 12 pass in these subjects is not a requirement in most states for entry into teacher education courses.

Universities alone cannot be held accountable for the quality of students they take into their courses, but the current practice whereby universities are free to enrol students in teacher education courses until they fill course quotas, regardless of academic ability, clearly needs to be reviewed. One way to rectify this situation over the long term is to move teacher education to the post-graduate level. Another is to withhold accreditation for courses that are unable to attract sufficient students from the top third of high school graduates.

See also Entry to the Profession below.

Who is attracted to teaching?

The role of salary

Teachers' reasons for entering teaching tend to be consistent across studies. Altruism and intrinsic fulfilment, along with desire for professional growth, predominate (McKenzie et al., 2008; Dinham, 2000; Dinham & Scott, 1998). Dinham and Scott (1998) found in a NSW study that females were more likely to report that they had 'always' wanted to be a teacher, while males were more likely to report that teaching was not their first career choice. Those who admitted they were attracted to teaching because of the supposed short hours and long holidays soon realised how unrealistic their view of teaching was.


In an earlier study, Dinham found that 'brighter' women were attracted to teaching in the 1960s and 1970s because it offered the opportunity through a teacher scholarship for a tertiary education otherwise unavailable to them. However, since then, career opportunities for women have broadened from the traditional female occupations of 'teaching, nursing or secretarial work', with brighter women going elsewhere, including better rewarded professions (Dinham, 1992).

Salary is often reported to be a 'neutral' factor among people who decide to enter teaching. This finding is not surprising. Given current salary levels it would have to be, otherwise they would not have chosen teaching!

It is important to know who chooses not to teach and why. UK research shows that the factor that explains, more than any other, the variation in the quality of university graduates who choose to enter teaching over the long term is the salary of teachers relative to that in other professions and occupations at the time (Chevalier et al., 2007).

A recent review of attitudes to teaching prepared by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training reported that status and remuneration were among the main reasons why many

graduates well qualified to become teachers choose not to enter the profession (DEST, 2006). Senior secondary students who did not want to become teachers saw teaching as a low status job. Parents thought that low university entrance requirements had lowered the status of teaching and resulted in a lower quality teaching workforce and that teaching is low paid, low status work.



Salary may not be a strong reason why current teachers have chosen to teach, but it is a strong reason why many abler graduates choose not to teach, and this is cause for considerable concern if we want our education system to remain among the best in the world. There is no justification for assuming from this that our society can continue to get away with not paying teachers what they are worth. Research studies also constantly confirm that salary and working conditions are the main reasons why many good teachers leave the profession.

Altruism is no guarantee of capability to become an effective teacher, whereas verbal and academic ability have constantly been shown to distinguish more from less effective teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Both commitment and academic capability are important.

The recent Staff in Australia's Schools (SIAS) study (McKenzie et al., 2008: xii) found the following:

Teachers: The most common gross teacher salary ranges are \$60,001–\$70,000 (35% primary, 36% secondary) and \$50,001–\$60,000 (24% primary, 21% secondary). The former salary range includes

the top salary increment for most states and territories in 2006. Secondary school teachers tend to have higher salaries than primary school teachers, with 22% of secondary school teachers and 11% of primary school teachers earning above \$70,000.

Leaders: Nearly half (48%) of primary school principals reported an annual salary between \$90,001 and \$110,000. Secondary school principals earn a somewhat higher annual salary with 43% recording between \$100,001 and \$120,000.

Beginning salaries for teachers are competitive with those from other professions, although there is significant variation from employer to employer. However, after fifteen years teachers' salaries are much less competitive. Salaries plateau after around eight years, at a time when salaries in other professions are rising steeply for the most able practitioners. A distinguishing feature of pay scales in Australia, compared with most OECD countries, is how quickly teachers reach the top of the incremental pay scale.

There is evidence of a largely hidden resignation 'spike' after eight to ten years of teaching, which coincides with teachers reaching the top of the various salary scales (Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003). For some teachers, this may be a case of 'now or never' when it comes to seeking a new career, a decision that crystallises when teachers reach the maximum and final salary step. Salary increments to the top of the scale are in effect automatic. It is very rare for increments to be withheld. Only a minority of principals surveyed in the SIAS study reported that their school's salary structure was 'very effective' or 'effective' in attracting and retaining teachers and in attracting teachers to leadership positions (McKenzie et al., 2008: 120).

Recognising and rewarding quality teaching

It is important to distinguish between incentives that attract teachers, those that retain them, and those that improve their practice. The best teachers stay in teaching because of intrinsic rewards, but they will eventually leave if the salaries and working conditions are unsatisfactory. Therefore, the challenge for policy-makers is to ensure their schemes provide both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Most teachers want to teach well – to have a sense of increasing efficacy. They also crave public recognition for good teaching and greater understanding of the complexity of good teaching. There are plenty of teachers who have reached high standards, but our current systems for providing them with public and valued recognition of their achievement are inadequate.

Linking teachers' professional learning with rewards through a reformed career structure is an idea attracting broad support. The idea of paying teachers more for higher levels of knowledge is not new. For many years, in many other occupations, employers have paid higher salaries to employees who have advanced qualifications or who undertake extra courses. In recent years the debate has moved on to include the notion of rewarding 'performance' and developing 'performance cultures'.



Present arrangements in teaching do not encourage, reward or indeed require advanced professional learning.

If teachers know more, so the argument goes, they should be expected to perform better. Recognition and reward are thus dependent not only on teachers providing evidence of learning but on evidence that learning has resulted in superior teaching performance.

Michael Chaney, when suggesting that it would be in the best interests of the community to reward teachers on the basis of performance, defined performance as 'how teachers would rank against national standards of accreditation focused on teaching skills and achieving improved outcomes for students' (Address to the BCA annual dinner, 2007). Chaney is not alone in proposing a performance-based reward system for teachers. Support for the development of teaching standards for the twin purposes of professional learning and evaluating teaching performance has come from the Australian Labor Party, the Australian Education Union, the Ministerial Council on Education Employment and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), a number of teachers' professional subject associations, teacher registration bodies in seven of eight jurisdictions, the Australian Council of Deans of Education, the Australian Government, the Catholic and independent school systems, and state governments across Australia.


Over 80 per cent of teacher respondents to the SIAS survey agreed or strongly agreed that professional teaching standards should be used to guide initial teacher education. Around 75 per cent agreed that standards should be used in any performance appraisal process. Seventy per cent of secondary teachers and 67 per cent of primary teachers agreed with the notion of higher pay for teachers who demonstrate advanced competence (McKenzie et al., 2008: 99).

The Australian Labor Party's policy statement, *Teaching Standards: Recognising and Rewarding Quality Teaching in Public Schools*, released in October 2006, committed an incoming Labor government to the establishment of a standards-based system for recognising teaching excellence. It included provision for 'enriching' teacher career paths through negotiated awards or collective agreements, and allows teachers who meet rigorous standards for highly accomplished teaching to qualify for an additional payment of up to \$10,000 per year.

The Australian Education Union's policy statement: *Professional Pay and Quality: Teaching for Australia's Future*, (nd, c2007) called for the establishment of a set of professional teaching standards that are aligned with the standards developed by the MCEETYA and a number of state

registration bodies. It proposed 'a professional standards-linked career reform to recognise and enhance the high quality of teaching which students need to meet the challenges of the future' (p. 2). According to the policy, teachers who wished to gain the status of Accomplished Teacher would be assessed against the standards by 'a fair and independent process' and rewarded 'through salary increases, not one-off cash bonuses' (p. 2).

The AEU policy statement notes that high-quality teaching will only occur in educational settings in which class sizes are reasonable, the physical conditions are adequate, and teachers are not overburdened. The reform would need to be properly funded at national and state levels: 'Professional teaching conditions and the funding to achieve them are an absolute condition on which the AEU insists for the negotiation of professional career reform' (p. 4).



It is clear that there is a broad consensus that action is needed to radically strengthen procedures for recognising and rewarding teachers who reach high teaching standards.

PART 2 ASSURING TEACHER QUALITY: AREAS FOR ACTION

Develop nationally coordinated policy for recruiting, preparing and recognising quality teachers

Education policy needs to focus on what matters most to student learning – concerted, long-term strategies to ensure that effective mechanisms are in place for assuring quality in the teaching profession. We know that good teachers matter, but we must start to act as if we really believed it.

Although there is strong agreement that every strategy for improving student outcomes depends fundamentally on teacher quality, it is difficult to find evidence of concerted, coordinated policy efforts by state and federal governments focused on teacher quality.

Efforts to increase the quality of entrants may, for example, be undermined by selection quotas at the university level. Is it in the interests of school students for universities to be unaccountable for the quality of future teachers their courses attract, or the quality of their graduates? State teacher registration bodies responsible for the quality of entrants to the profession have little power to implement rigorous, independent procedures for accrediting teacher education courses. Teacher registration is a key quality assurance mechanism, but is merely a rubber stamp operation in most states and territories.

Ongoing professional learning is vital to quality teaching, but salary structures do not provide incentives to reach high teaching standards. It is the knowledge and skill of good teachers that enable schools to reach their objectives, yet teaching well does not have the same status as administration or management. Policymakers may talk about promoting the status of the teaching profession, but give teacher organisations little responsibility for developing and applying their own standards for professional certification. School funding may not enable schools of low socioeconomic status or in remote areas to compete successfully for accomplished teachers.



Who really believes that a top salary for classroom teachers of about \$70,000 means we place sufficient value on teachers' work to attract the best university graduates? Who really believes that the typical office spaces in which teachers are expected to prepare and assess student work and carry out their business are indicators of an attractive and esteemed profession?

Coherent and integrated policy frameworks are needed that will nurture, sustain and improve quality in the teaching profession over the long term. A coordinated policy for quality teaching would embrace a wide range of quality assurance mechanisms. These include salaries and career structures to assure the quality of applicants for teaching courses, entry standards for teacher education courses, procedures for the accreditation of teacher education courses, graduation standards and standards for registration, professional learning and performance management programs, and incentive systems for certifying and rewarding increasing standards of teaching and school leadership.

Two states in the USA, Connecticut and North Carolina, decided to do just this over 20 years ago. These states showed the most gains in national tests of student achievement from 1992 to 1996 (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

CONNECTICUT'S STORY

A Model of Teaching Policy (Wilson, Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2001)

Connecticut provides a valuable case study of a state that ensured teacher quality currently permeated education reform discussions and policy making. From the mid-1980s, Connecticut focused its reform efforts on the quality of teaching as the most important influence on student learning. As a result, its students have made large achievement gains, even though the percentages of students who are poor and/or minority are increasing.

Connecticut has an enviable pool of well-qualified teachers. Most important, its commitment to investing in resources and efforts that link good teaching with student learning is embedded in the state's policy environment. Rather than a silver-bullet approach to improving teaching, Connecticut is an exemplar of thoughtful, consistent policies that, over time, are achieving the goal envisioned in all reforms – higher student learning and an invigorated teaching force.

How Connecticut Began Its Comprehensive Policies

In the mid-1970s a state court decision mandated greater school funding equity. The court decision emphasised the importance of teachers and other resources, especially for the most needy school districts.

About the same time, greater teacher professionalism was emerging as an issue nationally. State policy targeted four critical areas: recruitment, initial preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development. These areas still provide the framework for teacher quality policies.

Several legislative actions in 1986 established much of the framework, including:

- An increase in and equalisation of teacher salaries across the state, with supplementary grants that enable poorer districts to be more competitive in the market for high-quality teachers.
- Higher licensing standards that required teachers to have an academic major in their assignments, more focused study of pedagogy, stricter preparation for the teaching of students with special needs, and passing scores on basic skills and content tests.
- Incentives to attract high-ability candidates into teaching.
- Elimination of emergency licensing and tougher requirements for temporary licences.
- A tiered teacher certification system that provides mentors and other support for beginning teachers and requires teachers to participate in professional development in order to renew their professional certificate.

Within three years of the enactment of the reforms, Connecticut had gone from a teacher shortage to a teacher surplus, and evidence of teacher quality was growing.

Connecticut continues to rank first or second nationally in the average salaries of teachers.

Connecticut's impressive record in improving student achievement probably is due to several factors. The comprehensive teacher policies provided a base of expertise for all other reforms. According to several studies, two other reasons need to be considered. The first is Connecticut's approach to accountability. It uses low-stakes, standards-based reforms that depend on authentic, information-rich assessments. Districts and schools have high-quality data to help them understand where they need to target their efforts.

Second, Connecticut has provided consistent funding for statewide education reforms, directing resources to the neediest areas while continuing to support efforts to improve the quality of teaching.

One study discounted other reasons for rising student achievement that often appear in reform scenarios. Neither class size nor total instructional time changed significantly in the past 15 years, which suggests that the quality of teaching might well be credited with much of the progress made by students. Highly effective practices reflected in the best research available, for example, were quite evident in the reading instruction used in Connecticut classrooms.

Entry to the profession

Mechanisms in Australia to ensure the quality of entrants to teacher education programs are weak, compared with countries whose students achieve higher results on international tests (McKinsey & Company, 2007). There is also a diversity of views over the best means to select potential teachers who enter teaching via multiple pathways as well as whether and how aptitude for teaching might be measured (*Top of the Class*, 2007).

Entry standards to teacher education courses across Australia's universities are highly variable and too low overall (*Top of the Class*, 2007: 57). For some high-demand courses, ENTER scores are above the 80th and even 90th percentiles, while other courses have

cut-off scores in the low 60s. Some advance entry schemes allow students who score far lower to enter teacher training. In some cases, ENTER scores have recently been set as low as 56 (Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre, 2008).³

Entry standards to teacher education courses across Australia did show a steady rise from a low base in the mid-1990s, with encouraging signs emerging of higher quality applicants seeking a career in teaching. However, since 2005–2006, standards have again declined overall, with Victoria for example recording a 6.8 per cent decrease in the number of Victorian students seeking to enter a teacher education course in 2008 (Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre, 2008).



Attracting enough people into teacher education and attracting people of suitable quality are two major issues that tend to work against each other.

Any decline in the attractiveness of teaching is cause for concern, particularly if this results in universities lowering entry standards to fill their allocated quotas for teacher education students. When decline in the attractiveness of teaching as a career coincides with projected teacher shortages, this increases the pressure for entry standards to fall.

This is the situation we face at present. Entry standards to teaching must not be allowed to fall further. Rather, they should rise.

The Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Education's 2007 report *Quality of School Education* stated:

'Teaching has long ceased to attract its fair share of the best and brightest intellects entering universities around the country each year. Some of the biggest teaching schools are accepting entry-level students with TER scores so low as to be equivalent to failure in other states ... For instance, only four out of 31 universities required Year 12 mathematics at any level, with another eight being content with Year 11 mathematics levels. The University of Melbourne claimed in its submission to the

House inquiry that an insistence on Year 12 mathematics would have resulted in half of the currently accepted applicants being rejected. Many universities appear to place a great deal of confidence in their ability to instil an adequate component of academic rigour over the four years of the B.Ed. degree, sufficient, that is, to cover the gap between poor or mediocre school results, and what is expected at graduation ... The committee doubts whether the community can be reassured that this confidence is not misplaced.'

The BCA strongly endorses the general recommendations of both the *Quality of School Education* and *Top of the Class* reports in respect of entry standards to teaching. In summary:

Research projects should be funded to develop more valid and reliable measures of suitability for teaching, the effectiveness of teacher education courses, and beginning teacher performance/capability. These measures should play a major part in the accreditation of teacher education courses.

High entry standards for teacher training need to be set:

- ENTER scores for teaching should not fall below the 75th percentile.
- All entrants to primary teaching should have studied English, mathematics and science courses to Year 12.
- The accreditation of teacher education courses that cannot attract high-quality applicants should be reviewed.

Professional preparation

Despite the generally good performance of Australian students on standardised international measures, key stakeholder groups such as the business community, governments, principals, professional associations, parent groups, teachers' unions, and the media have at times heavily criticised teacher education (Dinham, 2006).

There have been more than 100 inquiries and reviews into aspects of teacher education carried out in Australia since the late 1970s (*Top of the Class*, 2007). To date, the majority of inquiries and reviews have employed similar methodologies, involving committees (parliamentary, appointed), public hearings, submissions, case studies and visitations. Evidence is frequently anecdotal or incomplete, and various stakeholders tend to espouse predictable views. Measures of the effectiveness of aspects of teacher education courses and the efficacy of their graduates have been lacking to this point.

Often, while the general findings, criticisms and recommendations of previous reviews and inquiries have been consistent, teacher education appears to have changed little as a result, despite significant social, economic and contextual change within Australia and the rest of the world (Sachs & Groundwater-Smith, 2006; Dinham, 2006).

Top of the Class, the recent House of Representatives inquiry into teacher education, found:

'From the committee's perspective there is simply not a sufficiently rich body of research evidence to enable it to come to any firm conclusions about the overall quality of teacher education in Australia. There is not even agreement on what quality in teacher education means. Much of the data that is available is based on the perceptions of recent graduates, teachers and principals as reported in answers to questionnaires. While this data is useful

and should form part of the evidence about the effectiveness of teacher education, in the committee's view it is not on its own sufficiently robust to inform either course reviews or policy development.'

(*Top of the Class*, 2007: 6–7)

In considering the strengths and weaknesses of common approaches to teacher education, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005: 391–392) have commented:

'In the recent past, many teacher education programs have been criticized for being overly theoretical, having little connection to practice, offering fragmented and incoherent courses, and lacking in a clear, shared conception of teaching among faculty. Indeed, conceptual and structural fragmentation is a consistent theme in studies of teacher education ... Programs that are largely a collection of unrelated courses, without a common conception of teaching and learning, have been found to be relatively feeble change agents for affecting practice among new teachers.'

The key quality assurance mechanism for professional preparation courses is accreditation by an external professional body, such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching or the NSW Institute of Teachers. The overriding requirement of accreditation is to ensure that teacher education providers produce teachers who are competent to practise as beginning teachers. A recent ACER study (Ingvarson et al., 2006) found considerable variation in the nature and rigour of current procedures for the accreditation of teacher education courses across states and territories. The legislation that describes the course approval and accreditation functions for state and territory registration authorities also varies considerably. Smaller states and territories have found that their capacity to implement rigorous and useful accreditation processes can be limited.

There are about 200 teacher education courses altogether in Australia. Approximately 16,000 students completed such courses in 2005. However, little is known about the relative effectiveness of these courses in preparing future teachers because no data are gathered that would enable comparisons of graduate capabilities to be made.

Top of the Class affirms the need to 'promote consistency in the development and application of national professional standards for teaching, particularly in teacher registration processes' (2007: xxii). It envisages that linking graduate entry standards to processes of teacher registration would provide clear goals for the design of teacher education programs, in that all aspects of the standards would need to be covered in the courses. The report recommends that the standards, which would be the responsibility of a national accreditation body, would be used to accredit all teacher education courses offered in Australian universities, thereby achieving national consistency in course content. It also notes that: 'Significantly, the Australian Council of Deans of Education gave strong support for the notion of national accreditation, pointing out many of its advantages' (p. 31).

The BCA strongly supports current moves by state ministers and state teacher registration bodies to establish a national agency responsible for providing independent, external assessments and accreditation of teacher education courses – akin to the Australian Medical Council. Accreditation should be based in large part on measures of student preparedness and capabilities.



The next step is to prepare future teachers through teacher education programs that meet the highest standards. It is becoming clear that the most effective way of achieving quality and consistency will be through a system of national accreditation of teacher education courses.

Ongoing professional learning

Continual professional learning is the central means for building capacity in the teaching profession. However, current arrangements mean that its links to improved student learning outcomes are limited.

A goal for profession-wide standards-guided learning systems is to place individuals in a more active role with respect to their professional learning. What would a professional learning system for teachers look like if its main purpose were to improve outcomes for all students?

The system would, of course, have to have the capacity to ensure that all teachers engaged in a carefully sequenced learning program over the long term that gave them the opportunity to reach high standards. The system would need to provide clarity about what the profession expected teachers to get better at, which is the purpose of teaching standards. The system would provide strong incentives related to career progression and salary increases for evidence that the standards had been met. Lastly, teachers would feel a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for the system.

Australian education does not have a strong record in providing coherent professional learning programs that meet the first three characteristics of effective professional learning programs that lead to improved student learning, as identified by Hawley and Valli (1999: 138):

1. Professional development is based on analyses of the differences between (a) actual student performance and (b) goals and standards for student learning.
2. The content of professional development (PD) focuses on what students are to learn and how to address the different problems students may have in learning the material.
3. Professional development involves teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the learning experiences in which they will be involved.

There are many professional learning courses, seminars and workshops for teachers, but in total the pattern of provision is brief, localised, fragmented and rarely sequential. They do not amount to a system with the capacity to engage most teachers in the professional learning experiences that will have a significant effect on student learning. Total investment by governments for ongoing professional learning for teachers is approximately one per cent of recurrent budgets, which is poor compared with commonly accepted levels of around five per cent in industry.

Extrinsic incentives must be strengthened. It is not in the interests of students that teachers feel little obligation, or have little support, to show evidence of keeping up with research and best practice in their field. The *Top of the Class* report proposes that recognition and rewards at post-registration levels of teachers' careers could be linked to standards of professional accomplishment and leadership. This would provide incentives for teachers to continue learning throughout their careers. It would also ensure that the provision of professional learning was incrementally linked to teachers' developing knowledge and skills.

Supply and demand for Australia's teachers

Obtaining aggregated data on Australia's teachers presents difficulties due to the various jurisdictions and sectors operating within Australian education. This makes workforce planning problematic. Obtaining the views of Australia's teachers about teaching is also difficult (Owen et al., 2008: 4–5).

There are three broad concerns with respect to workforce planning and Australia's teachers that tend to work against each other:

1. Providing sufficient *quantity* of teachers to meet current and emergent needs.
2. Ensuring the *quality* of new and practising teachers.
3. Matching teacher vacancies with teachers seeking employment.

Staff in Australia's Schools reported (Owen et al., 2008: 12):

'In 2006 there were just over 270,000 people working as teachers in Australian schools, or 240,000 teachers in full-time equivalent terms (ABS, 2007). Teaching is by far the largest employer of graduates in Australia. There are 60 per cent more teachers than nurses, and 50 per cent more teachers than accountants, which are the next two largest professions (Centre of Policy Studies, 2004).

The number of people working as teachers has grown by over 20,000 (8%) in the five years since 2001, or about 4,000 people per year (ABS, 2007). Underlying this net growth are large flows of people entering and leaving teaching each year.

Teachers are the most significant resource in schools ... Spending on [teachers' pay] is by far the largest component of school budgets, accounting for 53 per cent of government expenditure in government schools.'

A key factor in the demand for and supply of teachers is the well-documented ageing of the Australian teaching service, part of a global phenomenon. Teachers are older than comparable professionals and large numbers of teachers and school executives are expected to retire in the next five to 10 years. Many have been sitting at the top of salary scales for two to three decades. This has implications for the motivation and support of older teachers and the attraction, preparation and retention of their replacements. Already, shortages of teachers are occurring in certain geographic and subject areas (OECD, 2005; Auditor-General NSW, 2008).

Australia's decentralised and increasingly diversified education system makes a coordinated national response to the twin concerns of teacher quality and quantity difficult. The issue of estimating teacher demand four to five years ahead and allocating sufficient university places across the various universities and specialisations is far from an exact science, compounded by the fact that university places are federally funded while teacher employment is fragmented within jurisdictions (Owen et al., 2008: 13). It is not unusual, for example, to see simultaneous over- and undersupply of primary teachers in different jurisdictions while the numbers of primary teachers seeking work and vacancies are broadly in balance across Australia (MCEETYA, 2006).

The increasing feminisation of the teaching workforce is another global phenomenon. While not problematic in itself, it has consequences as women tend to be less geographically mobile than men. This also makes it difficult to balance teacher demand and supply. Female teachers currently comprise around 80 per cent of primary teachers and 56 per cent of secondary teachers in Australia, with feminisation steadily increasing (ABS, 2007).

Particular concerns have been raised about attracting and retaining teachers in mathematics, science, and information and communication technologies, part of a wider concern about the quality of teaching of these subjects in primary and secondary schools and the rapid expansion of alternative, better paid employment opportunities in the technology sector (Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003; Chinnappan et al., 2007). There is also concern over attracting and training sufficient numbers of teachers of languages other than English (Owen et al, 2008).

A result of such shortages is the increased incidence of 'out-of-field' teaching, whereby teachers take classes for which they are untrained. This is most prevalent outside the larger cities in regional and remote areas and in subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and ICT (McKenzie et al., 2008: xiii) and creates a quality and equity issue for teachers and students 'in the bush', where teachers are already disadvantaged because of lack of access to the professional learning opportunities available to their colleagues in the cities.

Much has also been said about resignation rates in teaching. Again, aggregated data are difficult to obtain, but it appears that anywhere from 19 to 28 per cent of Australia's teachers resign within the first five years of teaching, depending on the jurisdiction. Another 10 to 15 per cent of graduating teachers will not enter teaching. Not all are lost to teaching, however, and many will work in other systems, states, nations, in similar occupations such as staff development or re-enter teaching later. Training and replacing these teachers are costly in any case and as a result, there exists a large pool of teachers in Australia currently not teaching who could be induced to return in the future with suitable training and support (Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003; Owen et al., 2008).

Where data are lacking is with the reasons for this rate of resignation. Anecdotal evidence attributes a number of factors: poor quality of some entrants to teaching; inadequate training; lack of support; poor working conditions; poor student behaviour; low salary; better opportunities elsewhere; poor status of teaching. There is also a group of would-be teachers who are not recorded in resignation data. These people cannot obtain a permanent position and take up another career after experiencing the frustrations of contract and casual work.



There is a pressing need for a unified national approach to managing teacher demand and supply.

Owen et al., noted in the SIAS report *Teacher Workforce Data and Planning Processes in Australia* (2007: 4):

‘Workforce planning is essential to ensure sufficient numbers of well-qualified teachers and leaders to meet the emerging needs of schools in the 21st century. Given the current ageing workforce profile in Australia, there are concerns about teacher shortage, especially in some specialist subject areas, in rural and remote locations and in leadership positions. Teacher demand and supply issues affect many people and can have substantial implications for the quality of learning, curriculum provision, and school budgets.’

Summary

This section has argued that Australia needs more concerted action and coordination among policies and strategies designed to assure teacher quality.

The recent review by McKinsey & Company (2007: 13) showed that the world’s best performing school systems give priority to policies, strategies and institutions for recruiting, preparing and recognising quality teachers. They found that high-performing school systems consistently do three things well:

1. They get the right people to become teachers (the quality of the education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers).
2. They develop these people into effective instructors (the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction).
3. They put in place systems and targeted support to ensure that every child is able to benefit from excellent instruction (the only way for the system to reach the highest performance is to raise the standard of every student).

The OECD noted in its 2005 report *Teachers Matter* the need to develop and implement policy to address persistent and universal concerns about the quality of teaching: the attractiveness of teaching as a career; developing teachers’ knowledge and skills; recruiting, selecting and employing teachers; and retaining effective teachers in schools.

The next section focuses in greater depth on a fundamental component of national policy for promoting and assuring teacher quality – building a national system for identifying accomplished teachers and teacher leaders. Such a system is fundamental to improving the attractiveness of teaching as a career to abler graduates. It is also essential to improving incentives and rewards for evidence of increasing knowledge and skill, which is also essential to retaining our best teachers in positions where they can have most effect on maintaining high levels of student achievement.

PART 3 WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO STRENGTHEN THE TEACHING PROFESSION?

Introduction

Part 3 describes in more detail a key strategy for ensuring that teaching can compete more effectively with other professions for the ablest graduates, prepare them well, and retain them in the profession – *establishing a national certification system to provide powerful incentives to meet high teaching standards.*

It will be essential that the strategy described is accompanied by other commitments to provide working conditions in which teachers are able to teach as well as they can. Such strategies will require long-term investments in human capital. Intelligent, adaptable societies invest in a strong teaching profession over the long term.



The evidence is clear that nothing is as fundamental to the quality of learning opportunities that students receive in schools as the quality of their teachers. What students learn in schools depends primarily on the knowledge and skill of their teachers and school leaders.

It is also clear that there are no short cuts to ensuring a high-quality teacher workforce. Unlike the reform efforts in the past, future educational policies directed at improving Australia’s schools will need to give higher priority to strategies that strengthen the quality of the teaching profession over the long term.

It is encouraging therefore that the Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, recently announced that the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed to develop strategies that will give high priority to improving teacher and school leader quality.

Australia has a teaching profession that has performed very well if international studies of student achievement are a good guide. However, it is widely recognised that more positive action is needed to maintain our position and ensure quality teaching in the future. We cannot rest on the past. It is in the nature of the teaching profession that it needs to recreate itself continually.



There are no cost-neutral ways to ensure that in the future Australia will have a teaching profession equal to the best in the world. But there will be major costs if we do not. Fortunately, there is broad public recognition of the need for better pay and conditions for teachers. This is conditional, however, on guarantees that it will be linked to sound evidence of improving teacher quality and professional performance.

The time has come, therefore, for the teaching profession to take up the challenge of developing a system for defining high-quality teaching standards, promoting development towards those standards and identifying those who reach them – a national ‘certification’ system. The level of ownership of and commitment to professional standards within a profession will depend on the extent to which members of the profession are entrusted with their development and application. It is in the interests of employing authorities and the public that teachers have a strong commitment to their own standards and their application.

This certification system should be developed in close collaboration with employing authorities, teacher unions and researchers. Although development of the system should involve a wide range of stakeholders including governments, employing authorities and teacher unions, as well as professional associations of teachers and school principals, it will be vital that the certification agency conducts its assessment function independently of any particular stakeholder group, including teachers’ own professional associations, if its public and professional credibility are to be ensured.

And the time has come for governments and employing authorities to place greater value on the knowledge and skills involved in good teaching and provide more rewarding career paths for teachers who reach those high standards.

Australia’s education system will be strengthened if we recognise that there is a mutual responsibility between governments and employing authorities, and the profession, for ensuring that every student has the best possible opportunity to learn. Governments and the profession have complementary responsibilities and obligations to students. Teachers need a national body through which they can exercise their responsibility as a profession to define standards for accomplished practice and provide recognition to teachers who meet them.

In the following section it will be argued that in order to strengthen the teaching profession:

- A new national agency should be established with one sole function: to establish and provide a voluntary advanced certification system for teachers. (Initial registration is compulsory and remains the responsibility of state registration bodies).
- This agency should be constituted so that it brings together all the major stakeholders with an interest in recognising and rewarding quality teaching.
- The agency should offer certification at two levels beyond initial registration as a competent teacher: the **Accomplished Teacher** level and the **Leading Teacher** level. Salaries for Accomplished Teachers should reach a level that is twice the starting salary for graduate teachers. Leading Teacher salaries should reach a salary that is 2.5 times starting salaries.
- Standards at the Accomplished Teacher level should differentiate between what accomplished teachers know and do within each specialist field of teaching (e.g. early childhood specialist, primary school specialist, high school English specialist, etc.). Standards at the Leading Teacher level should differentiate between what teacher leaders know and do to promote improved learning outcomes among teams of teachers.
- The main purposes of the system will be twofold: to provide a basis for offering more attractive salaries and career paths to graduates and those who seek to change careers; and to strengthen incentives for professional learning and widespread use of successful practices.
- The proposed system will require the establishment of a new standards-guided professional learning infrastructure for teachers that will: provide clearer guidelines as to what the profession expects its members to become better at with experience; provide valued recognition to teachers who reach high standards; and provide employers with a valid basis on which to reward good teaching.
- To provide this infrastructure, consideration should be given to redirecting part of the funding for the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program to support teachers who choose to prepare to meet the standards for professional certification.
- It will take ten years to establish a national certification system. Funding for the necessary research and development will need to be in the vicinity of \$50 million.
- Once the system has reached a stable level it is estimated that 10,000 teachers will be applying annually for professional certification at the two levels. Costs of processing and assessing candidates will be about \$2,000. This cost should be shared by employers and government.
- In terms of salary costs, the BCA has estimated that an extra \$4 billion will need to be allocated by Australian governments to support the introduction of a new pay system based on a national system of standards for the assessment and certification of teachers.

This proposal amounts to establishing a revolutionary standards-guided professional learning system for the teaching profession with the capacity to engage all teachers in the kind of professional learning that leads to improved student achievement.


Increase incentives and rewards for evidence of increasing knowledge and skill

The typical salary scale for teachers is a weak instrument for lifting student learning outcomes. Fully qualified teachers reach the top of incremental scales very quickly in Australia – and the salary at the top of the typical incremental scale is only 1.47 times the starting salary, compared with 1.73 across OECD countries on average, and 2.48 in Japan and 2.78 in Korea (OECD, 2004).

Teachers may remain at top of the incremental scale for another 30 years or more. Many develop a strong sense that there is nowhere for them to go in status or career terms. The pay scale says, in effect, they are as good as they are going to get as teachers or that they are as good as they are expected to get, even though few believe there is not much more to learn about how to teach effectively. Consequently, the salary structure provides weak incentives to improve professional performance.⁴

There is widespread agreement that Australia needs to place greater value on teachers' work. How should this be done? Part of the answer certainly is to increase base pay scales for registered teachers significantly and to improve conditions of work. Teaching must be able to compete with other professions in attracting an appropriate share of abler graduates.

However, while this will help to attract more able people to teaching, it will not be enough to retain the best in teaching positions where they can have the most influence on student outcomes. Pay scales need to be reformed and extended, based on evidence of high performance standards. They need to reflect the fact that it is primarily through accomplished teaching that schools achieve their core purposes.



Newly conceived career paths are needed for the teaching profession to ensure that teachers have strong incentives to engage in the type of professional learning that leads to high teaching standards and improves student learning outcomes. Salary structures for teachers need to be more effective as instruments for promoting widespread use of successful teaching practices.

Reforming pay structures and career paths is fundamental to ensuring Australian students continue to reach high standards internationally. Pay scales should send a clear message that reaching high standards of performance is the main road to high status and career advancement in the profession.

As indicated earlier in this paper, a broad consensus has emerged that Australia needs a national system for recognising and rewarding quality teaching. The BCA has endorsed the stated intention of the Australian Labor Party (2006) to establish a standards-based system for supporting teachers to attain professional excellence, and to recognise that achievement through negotiated incentives and rewards (Chaney, 2007).

This system will be developed in full cooperation with the states and territories, and in consultation with teachers, parents and other stakeholders. The ALP paper states that significantly increased Commonwealth funding will be provided to support the system. There will be three types of costs: costs in developing new subject- and level-specific teaching standards and methods of assessing performance against the standards; costs in providing professional learning and support to teachers as they prepare for certification; and costs of processing and assessing applications for certification.

Build a standards-guided career framework for all teachers based on professional certification

Most current proposals for a national standards-based system for recognising and promoting good teaching envisage three levels of professional performance beyond graduation standards. Figure 1 illustrates these levels: the Registered (or Competent) Teacher level; the Accomplished Teacher level; and the Leading Teacher level. Figure 1 shows how these levels are linked to increasing levels of professional knowledge and performance, and to increases in salary. Figure 1 is based on the assumption that good teachers steadily improve the quality and range of their professional knowledge and skill and consequently increase their value to schools.

This proposal for four standards levels amounts to a call for a common standards-based career framework for the teaching profession nationally. The framework is consistent with standards frameworks developed by many groups, including MCEETYA, the NSW Institute of Teachers, the AEU and the ALP. It is also consistent with standards for accomplished teaching developed by several teacher–subject associations, such as the Australian Science Teachers Association and the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers.

It is a broad framework. There would, of course, be multiple variations on this theme within particular schools and jurisdictions, but the underlying career structure would be common across the profession, as it is in other professions.

It will be clear that such a system will stand or fall depending on the rigour of methods used to determine whether teachers have attained the relevant standards. Creating better systems for rewarding accomplished teachers will depend on the prior development of a valid, reliable and independent system for identifying those teachers – a ‘certification’ system.⁵

Registered Teacher. In Figure 1, graduation standards are based on successful completion of a nationally accredited teacher education program. However, attaining the Registered Teacher level would be based on meeting the relevant state and territory teacher registration agency performance standards after no more than three years experience as a provisionally registered teacher. Full entry to the profession would be delayed until teachers have demonstrated competence in promoting student learning in a range of teaching settings. This is already happening in some states. Registration standards should be applied consistently across the nation in assessing performance.

Gaining Registered Teacher status should lead to a new salary band about 1.25 times the salary of the beginning Graduate Teacher.

Accomplished Teacher. The standards of professional knowledge and performance expected for the Accomplished Teacher level should be set at a level that the profession expects most teachers to achieve after about 10 years of experience, and with appropriate opportunities for professional learning in their specialist field of teaching (e.g. early childhood, primary school, high school subject field/s). Teacher associations should have a major role to play in developing Accomplished Teacher standards. The standards should reflect the current knowledge base about effective teaching in these specialist fields. It will be important for the certification body to set similar performance standards across different subject and level specialisations. Achieving the performance standards for Accomplished Teaching should give career teachers access to a salary band that leads to a salary about twice that for starting graduate teachers. Accomplished Teachers who take on leadership roles should be given an appropriate time allowance and administrative support, rather than extra pay.

Leading Teacher. Access to the Leading Teacher classification should be based on a track record of leading and managing colleagues in successful initiatives to improve student learning and welfare. Standards for a Leading Teacher should reflect the key areas of school functioning where leadership is needed to sustain an effective and accountable professional culture.

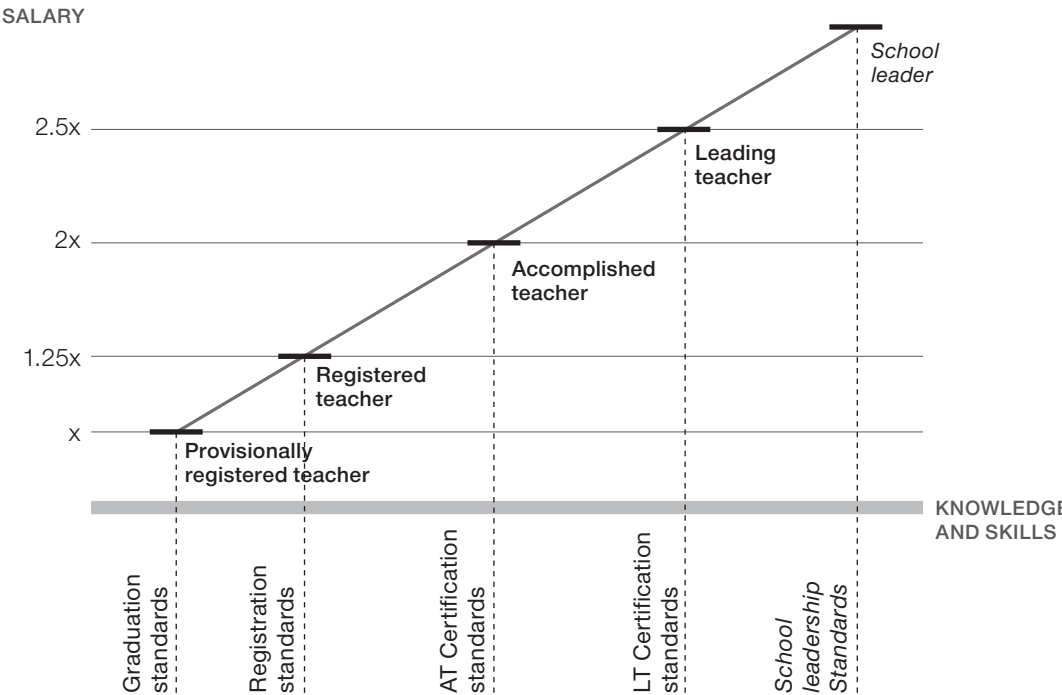
Principal associations should have a major role to play in developing standards for aspiring principals. Achieving certification as a Leading Teacher should lead to a salary that is about 2.5 times the Graduate Teacher salary.

Estimated salary costs. In 2006 there were approximately 240,000 teachers in Australian schools, in full-time equivalent terms. According to the ACER study, *Staff in Australia's Schools* (McKenzie, et al., 2008), about 75 per cent of teachers are currently at the top of existing incremental salary scales, or at some step below. The rest are in various

types of promotional positions such as managing a department, coordinating a year level, specialist teacher, or some other position of responsibility.

It is estimated that it would take about 10 years to move from current teacher profile to that set out in Figure 1 where about 50 per cent of teachers would be at the Accomplished Teacher level or above. Therefore salary budgets would only rise gradually. At a stable equilibrium stage after 10 years or so, it might be expected that about 20 per cent of teachers in a typical school would be Leading Teachers, 30 per cent would be Accomplished Teachers, 40 per cent would be at the Competent Teacher stage in their careers, and about 10 per cent at the Graduate Teacher stage. (For schools where such a balance has yet to be achieved, special efforts, such as bonuses and allowances, would need to be made to enable those schools to achieve an equitable balance of Accomplished and Leading Teachers.)

FIGURE 1
A STANDARDS-BASED CAREER STRUCTURE



In effect, the present proposal means that over time the proportion of teachers who have moved above the top of the incremental scale would rise from about 25 per cent to 50 per cent. Thirty per cent would rise to salaries for Accomplished Teachers that were twice the salary for Graduate Teachers, or about \$90–100,000. Another 20 per cent would rise to salaries for Leading Teachers that were two and a half times that of Graduate Teachers, or about \$110–120,000. (These teachers would of course still be subject to performance management expectations operating in their school/system.)

Based on current teacher numbers, it is estimated that additional staffing costs for classroom teachers per annum would slowly rise to a level that is about \$4 billion higher than current annual levels, a rise of about 20 to 25 per cent. This would be moderated by a predicted shift to a younger teacher profile over the next 10 years as most teachers over 50 years of age (nearly 30% of teachers) will have retired.

Rather than gaining extra pay for managerial work, it is assumed that Accomplished Teachers who choose to take on leadership work will have reduced classroom teaching allotments and extra administrative support. This sends an important message – that teaching well is as essential to achieving a school's objectives as administrative duties.

Mainstream career paths for Accomplished Teachers

Under this proposal, attaining the standards at each level would be a prerequisite for moving to the next stage. Certification as an Accomplished Teacher would be a prerequisite in applications for promotion and school leadership positions, or gaining them on an ongoing (permanent) basis. And certification as a Leading Teacher would be a prerequisite for school leadership positions. This proposal will overcome one of the major weaknesses in earlier schemes such as the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST), where teachers could by-pass the AST process and go directly to promotion positions.

This suggestion may seem surprising, but it is well justified by many research studies showing that the most effective school leaders are highly credible to teachers as expert teachers themselves (see Mulford, 2006; Robinson & Timperley, 2007; Dinham, 2007a). Teachers are more likely to look for leadership from principals and deputy principals who have been successful teachers. Its main virtue, compared with early schemes such as the AST concept, is that it provides powerful incentives for all teachers to engage in modes of professional learning that lead to improved student outcomes.

The idea that a career path for good teachers should be an 'alternative' pathway to that followed by teachers moving into leadership and executive positions (as with the AST concept) has been tried in most states and it has failed (Ingvarson & Chadbourne, 1997; Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2008). In those states and territories where it survives, these schemes attract few teachers and consequently have limited effects on most teachers' professional learning. These alternative career path schemes failed to ensure that the pay system drives professional learning for all teachers, or that teaching is a more attractive profession to able graduates who are interested in a career in teaching.

The scheme proposed here will overcome weaknesses in previous and existing schemes by providing a single career framework for all teachers, and by establishing a much more rigorous and independent process for assessing teachers who apply for advanced levels of professional certification. It also provides much more powerful salary incentives than previous and current schemes.

For incentive schemes to work well, teachers would need to see the standards as challenging but achievable with reasonable effort. They would believe that if they had appropriate professional learning and support they could attain the standard after a few years. They would find the salary rewards difficult to resist (as well as the status); and, over time, more than matching or repaying the personal resources they would have invested in attaining the standards.

Establish a national agency to provide professional certification

Australia needs to create a much stronger, responsive market for accomplished teachers and leading teachers. One way to achieve this is for the profession to develop a rigorous system for identifying teachers who meet high standards that is credible to employers and the public.

More attractive career structures for teachers can be achieved if the profession greatly improves its capacity to define, evaluate and certify high-quality teaching. To drive professional learning and to influence teachers' career decisions, the certification agency needs to provide a form of professional recognition that most teachers regard as credible and desirable – and therefore seek. If the profession provides a credible certification system, it will be valued by employing authorities seeking to lift the quality of teaching in their schools.

An important distinction needs to be made here between a profession-wide system for *identifying* teachers who can meet the standards at each level and systems for *rewarding* accomplished teachers negotiated at the local level. The former is the responsibility of an independent, national agency. The latter are properly the responsibility of employing authorities. It is their prerogative to decide whether and how to recognise professional certification.

Certification is the soundest basis on which to link pay to performance in the professions. Systems used by employers to register beginning teachers and reward accomplished teachers will be more credible to teachers and other interested parties if they can call upon and incorporate certification by an independent and respected professional agency.

A certification system should also be distinguished from 'performance management' systems, which are the responsibility of employers and school principals. The role of a voluntary profession-wide system would be to provide teachers with a portable *certification* that they have met standards for accomplished professional performance – one that is credible also to employers and gains their support and recognition.


A certification agency does not tell employers what form of recognition they should give to teachers who gain its certification. But it does aim to provide a service they can use to provide incentives and recognition for high levels of professional performance.

Why a national, profession-wide system?

The Australian teaching profession, unlike most professions, lacks such a national body that provides a certification service. It is unrealistic to expect individual schools to create and operate their own assessment and certification system. Such schemes are unlikely to provide consistency of judgment from school to school, or lead to a certification with profession-wide respect and currency.

Who should provide such a system?

Individual employing authorities are clearly not appropriate, nor are teacher registration authorities. The main legislative function of State and territory registration authorities is to regulate the quality of entrants to the profession, not to provide a voluntary system for professional certification. Nor would these bodies have the capacity to provide a national system that covers the whole teaching profession.




The best option is for the Commonwealth, states and territories governments to support the establishment of a national, independent agency with one core function: to provide a rigorous, voluntary certification system for all teachers who wish to demonstrate that they have attained advanced levels of professional performance. This agency should see its main role as providing a credible certification service to all employers and the public, not only the profession. The agency should live or die depending on the validity and credibility of its assessment processes.

If the proposed agency is to carry out its function effectively, it is vital that teachers are fully engaged from the start and feel a sense of ownership for the quality of the system. The agency should not duplicate the roles of peak professional associations or state regulatory bodies. However, it will be vital to ensure that the agency is constituted so that its governing board brings all stakeholders with a direct interest in promoting quality teaching and school leadership around the table to ensure the system will be utilised, including employing authorities, teacher unions and associations. While the system for providing certification should be profession-wide, the way it is recognised and rewarded is likely to vary from one jurisdiction to another.

This proposal is equivalent to the form of advanced certification provided by other professions, such as Certified Practising Accountant, Chartered Engineer or Fellow in the case of the various medical colleges. Success in this kind of performance evaluation leads to a portable qualification that is not tied to a particular employer or position within an organisation. However, professional associations know that they must ensure their certification is rigorous if employing authorities are to use it in selection and promotion decisions.

Some have proposed that each school or employing authority develop its own scheme for assessing teacher performance for high-stakes decisions like certification. This would be equivalent to every business developing its own certification system for accountants, or each hospital administration developing its own certification system for doctors, or each engineering firm creating its own 'chartered engineer' standards.

Professional certification should be portable, across states, territories and school systems.⁶ To strengthen teaching as a profession, this system will need to be profession-wide, not limited to public schools or particular jurisdictions. We do not have one certification system for doctors who work in public hospitals and another for those who work in private hospitals. It would be a waste of resources to establish different certification systems for different states and different school systems.



Australia does not need a raft of ill-considered performance pay or bonus pay schemes, here today, discredited yet again tomorrow. What it needs is bipartisan support to build a rigorous national certification system fit for a profession, one that employing authorities and the public regard as a solid foundation on which to provide better salaries and career paths for teachers who reach high standards of performance.

Essential components of standards-based performance assessment for professional certification

The essential components of a standards-based system for identifying accomplished teachers are:

1. Standards that define what accomplished teachers know and do (i.e. what counts as accomplished teaching and, therefore, what is to be assessed).
2. Assessment methods – structured tasks that describe how teachers can provide valid evidence of their practice and thinking in relation to all the standards.
3. Methods for setting standards and training peer assessors to judge the evidence against the standards consistently and fairly.

These are the basic requirements that need to be in place if any system for assessing complex professional performance, such as teaching, is to gain credibility (Ingvarson & Rowe, 2008).

Well-written, authentic standards help to change the public perception of teaching. They provide convincing evidence of the sophistication and complexity of what good teachers know and do. Valid teaching standards delineate what accomplished teachers know and do within different learning or subject areas, and different school levels (e.g. what an accomplished primary teacher knows about teaching reading is very different from what an accomplished high school science teacher knows about how to make the concept of energy meaningful). Expert teachers and educational researchers in the various specialist fields of teaching can elaborate on what accomplished teachers know and do in their field.

A standards-based performance assessment system requires the careful development of common assessment tasks, by means of which teachers can provide evidence to show how they meet the standards in their classroom. They also need examples of what counts as meeting the standard, or 'benchmarks' that indicate how good is good enough to meet the standard. This kind of work requires expertise in educational measurement.

Recent approaches to standards-based methods for assessing teacher performance

Teacher evaluation is a large field of study and it is only possible here to give a very brief overview of work in this area. The important point is that this field has reached the point where there is confidence that teachers' performance can be assessed against standards in ways that are valid, reliable and fair. Perhaps more importantly, it can be done in ways that teachers are very comfortable with, and in ways that have significant effects on their professional development.

Some (often those from outside teaching) believe that recognising a good teacher is a simple matter. It is common, however, to hear teachers say that they do not see how it is possible to assess their work objectively and in ways that take into account the context in which they work.

The research indicates that the teachers are right. For the record, educational researchers tried for most of the last century to come up with valid, reliable and legally defensible methods for evaluating teachers, without much success. Devising reliable instruments for gathering evidence about the full scope of a teacher's work proved more difficult than expected.

Early research efforts until the 1960s tended to rely on highly subjective ratings by administrators of a teacher's personal qualities, rather than examining the actual nature of their practice. This research produced little that was useful and the ratings were notoriously inconsistent or low on reliability.

From 1960s on, the research approach swung in the other direction in an attempt to identify teacher behaviours that correlated with gains in student achievement – the generic characteristics of the effective teacher. The main method of gathering data was by using fine-grained checklists to observe the frequency of classroom activities. These measures were more reliable but left out values and the importance of understanding the reasons behind a teacher's actions. Findings from this research were a little more useful but still disappointing in their obviousness. However, because they were only co-relational, the findings could not provide a valid basis for making high-stakes decisions about individual teachers, such as promotion or dismissal.


From the mid-1980s a major shift took place in research on teaching. Whereas previous research tried to find the characteristics of effective teachers, no matter what they were teaching, the new approach focused on in-depth studies of teachers teaching particular content and subject matter, and their reasoning behind how they planned and taught. The guiding research question was something like, 'What do teachers of junior primary mathematics who promote understanding of number concepts know and do?' – or equivalent questions in other fields of teaching.

Further details about new approaches to assessing teacher performance are provided in the Appendix.

Operating a national certification system for teachers

Developing and operating a professional certification system is complex and expensive. Rewarding teachers on the basis of their performance requires a rigorous system for measuring the quality of a teacher's knowledge and skills. Ingvarson and Hattie (2008) provide a detailed account of the work involved in establishing the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification system, the most soundly based system for identifying accomplished teachers that has been developed in any country.

Most performance pay schemes in the past have failed because they did not invest sufficiently in the research and development necessary to ensure the credibility of their methods for evaluating teacher performance (Ingvarson, Kleinhenz & Wilkinson, 2007). No one should be misled into thinking that this can be done reliably using statewide or national tests of student achievement.



There is ample research evidence now that teacher performance can be assessed in ways that are reliable, valid and fair. It is critical, however, that high-stakes evaluations of teacher performance be conducted by a process that is free from bias and cronyism and other threats to validity. That is one reason why a certification system needs to be operated by an independent agency.

Certification at each level should be based on performance, judged by the quality of opportunities for student learning a teacher provides, not years of service, or value-added measures based on standardised tests of student achievement. (While the latter may be used to provide evidence to validate a certification system, they are not, in


themselves, a valid basis for differentiating individual teachers for certification purposes.) Assessments need to be conducted by expert peers who teach in the same specialist field as teachers applying for certification. While further academic courses can play a vital role in supporting candidates for professional certification, course completion in itself is a poor indicator of performance capacity.

Teachers value collaboration with colleagues. Because certification is standards-based it does not suffer the problem of creating competition between teachers, which is a weakness of most merit pay schemes. In practice, preparation for certification stimulates greater collaboration between teachers as they seek feedback and support from colleagues. Wise school principals encourage all their teachers to apply for certification.

There is much to learn about how to establish a viable certification system in Australia. Such a system would need to be piloted and researched in a small number of willing school systems or in one or two areas of teaching such as mathematics or science, before being implemented on a broad scale, along lines set out in the ACER report on performance pay prepared for the Australian Government (Ingvarson & Kleinhenz, 2007). The Australia Science Teachers Association and the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers have demonstrated that they are ready to start providing certification and they would provide a valuable test bed.

Assessments should be conducted by peer assessors who work in the same teaching field as the teachers applying for certification. They would need to be carefully trained in standards-based methods for assessing evidence of teacher performance, such as video-based and student work-sample-based portfolio entries. These assessors should not have personal knowledge of candidates. Preferably, they would come from other states.

This is in no sense a return to the bureaucratic inspection systems of the past. The assessment system should call for teachers to provide a range of valid forms of evidence, including student work samples over time, videotapes or classroom observations and measures of content-specific pedagogical knowledge.



The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in the USA is an example of a successful certification system for teachers who reach high professional standards (www.nbpts.org). Since the National Board was established in 1987, international interest in it has grown steadily. No other country has made a similar investment in establishing a professional body with the capacity to provide a rigorous certification system that is valued by all stakeholders. Several independent evaluations have confirmed the validity of the National Board's certification as an indicator of teacher quality (Ingvarson & Hattie, 2008).

The first National Board Certified Teachers were granted certification in 1994. Since then, more than 140,000 teachers have applied and nearly 64,000 have become National Board Certified Teachers. Today, virtually every state in the US, and more than 25 per cent of all school districts, offer financial rewards or incentives for teachers seeking National Board Certification. There is still a long way to go in a nation of over 2.5 million teachers, but the NBPTS has already lasted much longer than most merit pay schemes with similar aims but very different methods of assessing teacher performance.

Currently, a number of states either have considered or are considering schemes for identifying and rewarding accomplished teachers. There is a danger that in the near future Australia may have a plethora of certification schemes within and across the states and territories run by the different sectors and employing authorities – the multiple rail gauge mentality. This would be an unfortunate development and difficult to reverse. There would be many advantages if these states and school sectors came together to support the development of a single profession-wide certification system for accomplished teachers and leading teachers, particularly given the context of an emerging national curriculum and standardised testing regime.

There would also be many advantages in the establishment of a single profession-wide system that provided teachers and employers with a credible certification for accomplished teachers, not least of which would be reducing the cost of developing the system while still having sufficient resources to ensure its quality. It is doubtful that there is an Australian system in place at the moment with sufficient rigour to warrant widespread adoption. A profession-wide system would have other obvious advantages in terms of providing the comparability necessary for the certification to be portable and recognised widely. This is important in a profession that is increasingly mobile across jurisdictions.

Create a standards-guided professional learning system for teachers and school leaders

This proposal amounts to a revolution in the professional learning system for the teaching profession. It aims to strengthen the capacity of the pay system to engage all teachers in standards-guided professional learning and, thereby, promote widespread use of best practice. When attached to a major salary step and recognition, professional certification can provide a powerful target for young teachers to achieve over the long term.

The key components of a standards-guided professional learning system (Ingvarson & Kleinhenz, 2006) include:

- *Teaching standards* that provide the goals and the major milestones for professional development over the long term of a career in teaching.
- Staged career paths that provide *incentives and recognition* for all who attain these standards.
- *An infrastructure for professional learning* whose primary purpose is to enable teachers to gain the knowledge and skill embodied in the teaching standards.
- A credible, voluntary system of *professional certification*, based on valid performance assessments, for teachers who have attained the standards.

These components can be conceptualised as four pieces of a jigsaw, whose interlocking character is captured in the figure below:

A STANDARDS-GUIDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SYSTEM



Each component has its own functions and characteristics, but each is less effective without the others. Taken together, the four components form a 'system' of interdependent and mutually supportive parts. If one were taken away the system would lose its capacity to function effectively as an instrument for encouraging and recognising evidence of professional learning.

A standards-guided system is complementary to, not a replacement for, the professional learning opportunities that employers should provide to support the implementation of changes and reforms they have initiated. That, properly, should remain the responsibility of employers but, as in any profession, employing authorities cannot and should not be expected to take responsibility for all professional development. The emerging system is an acknowledgement that, as in any profession, professional development is more than keeping up with policy changes made by governments and employing authorities.

A system for professional development based on profession-defined standards has the potential to overcome the widely recognised weaknesses in the traditional in-service education system for teachers. The principal weakness in the traditional system has been its failure to 'engage' the bulk of the profession in the enterprise of professional development and to create a sense of ownership for its quality.

Teaching as a profession is relatively powerless in relation to operating its own professional development system. These weaknesses call for a new conception of a professional development 'system' for teachers, as an alternative, or addition, to systems provided to support employer policy initiatives.

The concept of a standards-based professional development system is overturning old assumptions about who provides in-service education and how and where professional development takes place. Teachers and their professional bodies are more likely to set up their own support networks within and across schools to help each other implement teaching standards and prepare for the next career stage. They can work towards attaining profession-defined standards in multiple ways. Teachers and their organisations may make use of traditional providers such as universities and consultants in the new system, but the relationship will be more like that of a service provider contract between equals in which teachers set the agenda.

Final comments

Teacher quality is fundamental

The quality of what teachers know and can do is fundamental in a way that no other resource is in education.

The idea of a national curriculum has received much attention recently. While good curriculum guidelines, materials and resources may enhance a teacher's work, the quality of what actually happens with them in classrooms depends on the quality of the teachers who use them, not vice versa.

Technology has also received much attention. The 20th century is littered with promising educational innovations that failed to deliver or spread, especially in technology. The core message from research on educational reform is that there are no short cuts to better teaching and learning – not if they attempt to bypass improving teacher knowledge, judgment and skill. Educating minds well, no matter what the technology, depends fundamentally on what teachers know and do, their enthusiasm and the quality of intellectual interaction they can generate with their students.

Similarly, despite the heat about structural reforms and school reorganisation (such as selective schools, middle schools, single sex schools, local school management etc.), there is little evidence that structural reforms have significant effects on student learning outcomes, compared with the effects of improving the knowledge of skills of those who teach them (Dinham & Rowe, 2007).

Class size is important to teachers' sense of workload and ability to individualise their teaching. Although there are outliers, the current average class size in Australia is manageable for most teachers. The evidence indicates that returns from reducing class sizes further would be much less than returns from ensuring every classroom had a well-trained, accomplished teacher (Hattie, 2003; 2007). The money would be better spent on lifting teacher quality.

Some call for more spending on national and statewide testing of student achievement. Evidence from the UK and the US about the effects of this investment on classroom practice and student achievement should make one cautious about the value of expanding the amount of external testing further. Again, what may be more fundamental is strengthening teacher capacity; in this case, skills in diagnosing student understanding and assessing student progress, and in providing learning activities tailored to the needs of different groups of students.

While these approaches to improving teaching are undoubtedly important, their success depends ultimately on teacher quality.

Current policies are failing to protect teacher quality

Although teacher quality is the fundamental, underlying determinant of student learning in schools, it is hard to find concerted action and coordinated policy making at state and national levels focused on assuring teacher quality.

Teacher policy includes, for example, entry standards, assessment and accreditation of teacher education courses, registration standards, ongoing professional learning and certification of advanced levels of practice and leadership.

This report has indicated that the quality assurance mechanism at each of these stages is weak or non-existent in Australia. Entry standards are highly variable. Methods currently used to assess teacher education courses and register teachers lack rigour and the capacity to influence the quality of these courses. Salary scales provide few incentives for professional learning. Each of these quality assurance mechanisms is stronger in countries that out-perform Australia on international measures of student achievement.

Coordinated teacher policy is needed

This report calls for better coordination of policy focused on teacher quality at national and state and territory levels. What matters most needs to be what gets most attention – policies, strategies and institutions that assure a high-quality teaching profession.

Better data needs to be gathered about trends in teacher quality. Accountability for teacher quality is weak and dispersed, and this is undermining efforts to improve it. Responsibility for teacher quality needs to be more clearly delineated.

There is a strong case for setting common, high academic standards for entry to teacher education programs. The need for a national body responsible for the assessment and accreditation procedures of teacher education courses has been well made in other recent reports (Ingvarson et al., 2006; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, 2007). This body will need to develop new methods for measuring teacher education outcomes if it is to be effective.

Australia should move to a common set of teacher registration standards as soon as possible. More important, registration or full entry to the profession should be based on a rigorous standards-based assessment of performance after a two- or three-year probationary period.

Fundamentally, however, getting serious about teacher quality means lifting teacher salaries to levels whereby teaching can compete successfully with other professions for the best high school and university graduates – and ceasing to hide behind the fallacious argument that people who choose other professions because they are looking for financial security and status would not make good teachers.



There is no getting around the fact that teacher salaries must move upward relative to comparable professions and occupations if the profession is to attract and retain abler graduates.

Increase incentives and rewards for evidence of increasing knowledge and skill

While lifting salaries is vital, it alone will not be sufficient to lift the quality of teaching and learning in our schools to new levels demanded by a more global economy. New standards-based salary structures are needed that provide powerful incentives and rewards for improved knowledge and performance.

If the teaching profession wants the public to place greater value on its work, it will need to show that it can evaluate how well its members perform that work. It will need to grasp the challenge of learning how to provide a credible system for assessing its members' performance against professional standards.

If governments, employers and the public want to encourage professional learning and high-quality teaching, they must be prepared to create a stronger market for teachers who reach high standards of performance. A certification system helps to provide a sound basis on which employers can offer career progression and higher salaries.

Establish a national agency for the certification of accomplished and leading teachers

The most effective ways to bring these mutual interests together is to establish a new national agency whose function is to establish and operate a rigorous certification system for teachers. This agency should be constituted so that it brings together all the major stakeholders with an interest in recognising and rewarding quality teaching.

A highly respected professional certification system is pivotal to teacher quality policy. It is the foundation stone for any policy that seriously aims to lift teacher quality by attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers.

Policies aimed at improving salaries, lifting the attractiveness of teaching as a career, the quality of teacher education and the effectiveness of professional learning will amount to little without guarantees that they are linked to valid and reliable measures of better quality teaching. Without better methods for evaluating teachers' work, it will be difficult to ask the public to place greater value on the knowledge and skills of accomplished teachers. Unless greater value is placed on teachers' work, Australia's capacity to attract, develop and retain high-quality teachers will be weakened. Without high-quality teachers, our capacity to survive in the international economic environment of the 21st century will be compromised.

Australian governments together should invest in the establishment of a *Professional Standards Council for the Teaching Profession* and charge it with the responsibility to develop a valid and reliable system for providing certification to teachers who believe they have attained high standards of performance. This report has set out in detail what this would entail and the costs that would be involved in developing the system, in assessing candidates for certification and in providing new salary structures.

A gradual approach should be taken in developing the system. It will take time to develop standards in the various specialist fields of teaching. The NBPTS, for example, provides certification in 25 different fields for teaching, but it took 10 years to reach that stage. It would be wise to concentrate initially on one or two fields, such as upper or lower primary, or secondary mathematics and science. This will also provide opportunity to

iron out inevitable glitches in the assessment methods and operational procedures.

Not all school systems should be expected to opt in to a national certification system from the start. This is a case where it would be better to think big, but start small. Widespread recognition of national certification should come as the system provides evidence of its validity and reliability. Some government school systems, such as Western Australia, South Australia, and the Northern Territory, and some independent school authorities such as the NSW Association of Independent Schools, have already been exploring a form of certification. Some of these states or school systems might be willing to provide a test bed to support the development of the system and to support candidates as they trial the system.

This paper has been guided by a vision for the teaching profession in Australia. It is a vision based on the belief that the quality of learning opportunities that students receive in our schools is a shared responsibility between governments and the profession. The profession's part is to undertake responsibility for developing and ensuring high standards for practice, particularly standards for entry to the profession, standards for those who train teachers and standards for highly accomplished practice. Professional bodies usually play a major role in these key quality-assurance mechanisms. That has not been the case for teaching.

It is a vision of profession-wide standards that embraces all teachers and school leaders. It is a vision of a profession gaining sufficient confidence in its knowledge base to articulate standards for what its members should know and be able to do: standards that enable the profession to play a stronger role in determining long-term professional learning goals for its members. It is a vision of a profession gaining the self-respect required to expect its members to demonstrate commitment to those standards. It is a vision

of a profession that gains the trust needed from other stakeholders to develop a system for giving recognition to its members who reach advanced standards of practice. It is a vision of a profession that can be trusted to establish an independent national professional body with the capacity to carry out that function rigorously.



What is clearer now is the necessary relationship between the development of teaching as a profession and the development of more effective systems for teacher evaluation and professional development based on profession-defined standards. As we contemplate strategies for revitalising the teaching profession and assuring the quality of Australia's education system in the future, the strategy of establishing an independent national body with a clearly defined certification function has become an imperative.

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APPENDIX

Teacher evaluation

There is general agreement among experts in teacher evaluation that a valid and reliable scheme for assessing teacher performance for high-stakes⁷ decisions like certification must draw on several types of evidence. This is because such schemes need to encompass the full scope of what a teacher is expected to know and be able to do.

Teaching standards have provided the basis for more reliable methods of teacher evaluation developed in the 1990s. Their purpose is to describe the full scope of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. A set of standards typically includes a wide range of elements such as 'creating a productive learning environment', 'knowledge of content', 'promoting student learning' and 'contribution to the school and professional community', among others.

High-stakes assessment of a teacher's performance against a set of teaching standards calls for very different types, as well as multiple forms, of evidence. To illustrate, student evaluation instruments

(and parent feedback) can provide reliable measures of class environment. Paper and pencil tests are a valid means of gathering evidence about the currency of a teacher's content and pedagogical knowledge. Direct evidence that students are learning what the teacher is expected to teach is also essential. Contribution to the school and professional community requires documentation of activities and outcomes, verified by colleagues and principals.

A valid and reliable scheme for assessing individual teacher performance for high-stakes decisions therefore requires multiple independent sources of evidence and multiple independent trained assessors of that evidence. This means that any single measure, such as measures of student achievement on standardised achievement tests, cannot alone provide a reliable basis for making performance-related pay decisions about the efforts of individual teachers. Performance pay schemes also need to include evidence about the context in which a teacher is teaching in making judgments about the quality of teaching.

New approaches to assessing teacher performance

Research over the past 20 years has provided a deeper appreciation of what accomplished teachers know and do. Accomplished teachers not only know the subject matter they are teaching deeply – they know much more about how to help students learn that subject matter, how to identify barriers to understanding, how to help them overcome misconceptions and so on.

The idea of teaching standards emerged from this as a way of capturing what accomplished teachers know and do. This led to an important shift in thinking about teacher evaluation. Instead of sending evaluators in to use methods such as classroom observation checklists, which place teachers in a passive role, why not place teachers in a more active and professional role where they are invited to show how they meet the standards in their classroom and in their school context – standards that they and their colleagues have had a say in writing?

Here, in summary form, is a set of assessment tasks for primary teachers that illustrates this idea. (Full guidelines for these tasks are much more detailed.) When these tasks are completed successfully, a teacher might enter their responses into their teaching ‘portfolio’.

1. Provide evidence of a unit of work, with student writing samples, in which you have developed students’ writing ability over time.
2. Develop an interdisciplinary theme and provide work samples that show how you engage students in work over time that deepens their understanding of an important idea in science.
3. Provide a videotape and commentary illustrating how you create a climate that supports students’ abilities to understand perspectives other than their own.
4. Provide evidence, through a videotape, written commentary, and student work samples, of how you have helped build students’ mathematical understanding.

5. Provide documented evidence that you have presented two of the above portfolio entries about your teaching to a group of colleagues at a staff seminar in your school. Comment on what you learned.

Similar sets of tasks could be provided for other specialist fields of teaching.

There are several things to note about a set of portfolio tasks such as this for primary school teachers. The first is that, together, they provide evidence of teaching across four of the main areas of the primary school curriculum – literacy, mathematics, science and social science. This increases the validity and reliability of the assessment.

The second is teachers regard each task as a valid thing to ask them to do – as a way of providing evidence relevant to the standards. Although complex, they are authentic tasks; they are based on what most accomplished teachers normally do. All that a teacher is expected to add is a commentary on the evidence and an analysis of how the evidence illustrates the standards, together with a reflective section on what has been learned.

The third consideration is that the focus is on what the students are doing and learning as a result of the conditions for learning set up by the teacher, unlike merit pay schemes based on state or national test programs.

The fourth is that they provide a clear structure and length (e.g. no more than say 10 pages) within which teachers have freedom to show how they meet the standard in their context. They do not prescribe how they should teach or meet the standards. This common structure helps to ensure that the work involved in preparing portfolio entries is manageable for teachers, and comparable between teachers and across schools.

Lastly, each task provides evidence relevant to several standards at once, and together as a set, they ensure each standard is assessed by more than one task, thus adding to the reliability of the assessment.

As most sets of standards include statements about the importance of teacher knowledge, such as knowledge of relevant subject matter and knowledge about how students learn the subject matter, it is important to include assessments of that knowledge in addition to the portfolio entries. One way to achieve this is through the use of written assessments that teachers may complete in a secure 'assessment centre'. Here is one example of an assessment centre exercise:

Supporting Reading Skills (for primary teachers)

In this exercise, teachers demonstrate their ability to analyse and interpret student errors and patterns of errors in reading. Teachers are asked to analyse and interpret a transcript of a given student's oral reading of a given passage. Teachers are also asked to identify and justify appropriate strategies to address the identified student's needs.

Teachers can complete this type of exercise in about 30 minutes. A teacher might be asked to complete five or six such tasks in a half-day visit to an assessment centre.

Teachers are developing these portfolio tasks and written assessments in collaboration with experts in performance measurement. Some teachers feel uncomfortable about these tasks at first; this view usually changes quickly once teachers see examples of entries and the evidence is that teachers regard them as valid and reasonable things to be asked to do. Others find them exciting because they show respect for the sophistication and complexity of the knowledge held by

accomplished teachers in specialist fields like primary teaching. Two of the most attractive features of these assessment methods are that teachers take responsibility for providing the evidence, and that the method of providing the evidence necessarily engages teachers in processes of self-analysis, feedback and reflection that are the hallmarks of effective professional learning.

The portfolio entries and the written assessments might provide 10 separate pieces of evidence about what an applicant for certification knows and can do. Together, they provide a rich collection of evidence.

Can such evidence provide a valid basis on which to decide whether or not to grant certification to a teacher? The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is an example of a national certification system that uses these types of assessment. Its system has been subjected to several independent evaluations of its certification system. The main question these evaluators ask is, 'Do the students of teachers who meet the standards and gain National Board certification do better on tests of student achievement than students of teachers who do not?' The evidence on balance so far is that they do (Ingvarson et al., 2007; Ingvarson & Hattie, 2008). No other scheme for recognising and rewarding accomplished teachers, such as the Chartered Teacher in Scotland, or the Expert Teacher in England, can provide such evidence.

It is important to note that teachers and their associations play the major role in all stages of the NBPTS certification system, from writing the standards to conducting the assessments.

- NOTES
- 1 See http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/MR_PISA2006-3InternationalRankings.pdf.

2 See also 'Communiqué', Joint MCEETYA/MCVTE Meeting, Melbourne, 17 April 2008.

3 See www.vtac.edu.au.

4 In fact, there are disincentives for teachers who undertake additional professional learning through further study, which leaves them with either a HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme) or PELS (Postgraduate Education Loan Scheme) debt, yet no increase in salary.

5 The term 'certification' is used here in a generic sense to refer to an endorsement by an agency responsible for professional standards and assessment that a teacher has demonstrated that they can meet the relevant performance standards. Certification is portable; it belongs to the person. It is not a position tied to a school.

6 There is an argument to seek the participation of New Zealand in such arrangements or at least to articulate with New Zealand processes, given the Closer Economic Relations agreement and the current flow of teachers between New Zealand and Australia.

7 The term 'high stakes' refers to decisions that lead, for example, to significant financial rewards, promotion, access to further career stages as well as registration and certification by professional bodies. In contrast, evaluations of teacher performance for professional development or improvement purposes alone are regarded here as 'low stakes'.

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